

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3381

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7413

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR' PBOR' MO, SP, SS

SUBJECT: SAHARA

REF: RABAT 5115, RABAT 5114

1. I SAW CORTINA THIS EVENING AS A RESULT OF A REQUEST I HAD MADE YESTERDAY TO OBTAIN AN UPDATING ON THE SAHARA SITUATION IN THE LIGHT OF SOLIS' VISIT.

2. I SAID I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SPANISH POLICY ON THE SAHARA HAD PERHAPS CHANGED. CORTINA SAID NO, THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE. FROM THE BEGINNING SPAIN HAD ALWAYS SAID THAT IT WOULD TAKE THE MATTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL IF THERE WAS A THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY (THIS IS CORRECT). HASSAN'S MARCH IS JUST THAT CORTINA SAID A THREAT TO THE PEACE.

3. CORTINA WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD NOT TAKE FIRM ACTION TO END THE THREAT TO THE PEACE, SPAIN WAS FACED WITH THE NEED, IN THE ABSENCE OF U.N. ACTION, TO PROTECT ITS INTERESTS IN LINE WITH ITS DETERMINATION TO GET OUT OF THE SAHARA PEACEFULLY AND THUS HAD MOVED TO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO. INDEED, CORTINA SAID, THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION JUST PASSED MADE REFERENCE TO THE DESIRABILITY OF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS.

4. CORTINA SAID THE DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WERE A RESULT OF
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THE FAILURE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO TAKE ADEQUATE ACTION.

HE RECOGNIZED THE ALGERIAN INTEREST AND THE FACT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT IMPOSED ON THE SAHARAN PEOPLE BUT THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF THE EXERCISE NOW, ACCORDING TO CORTINA, HAD TO BE TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET OUT OF THE DANGEROUS IMPASSE WITH THE MOROCCANS. HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT IF SPAIN AND MOROCCO SHOULD REACH AGREEMENT, ALGERIA MIGHT WELL BE DISCOMFITED. HE ADDED THAT SPAIN HAD NEVER, EXCEPT IN ONE STATEMENT IN 1974, REFERRED TO INDEPENDENCE OF SAHARA. SUSQUENTLY REFERENCE HAD BEEN MADE TO SELF-DETERMINATION WITH INDEPENDENCE AS AN OPTION. SPAIN HAS ALSO NEVER REFERRED TO ALGERIA AS AN QTE INTERESTED PARTY UNQTE BUT ONLY AS A QTE BORDERING STATE WITH INTERESTS UNQTE. CORTINA COULD NOT PREDICT HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD COME OUT. HE WISHED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT SPANISH POLICS WAS TO GET OUT PEACEFULLY AND HONORABLY FROM THE SAHARA. IT WAS THE INABILITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO TAKE MEANINGFUL ACTION THAT HAD IMPELLED SPAIN TO ATTEMPT THIS SET OF NEGOTIATIONS.

5. WE HEAR FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT LARAKI WILL BE COMING ON SATURDAY AND THAT SOLIS DID ACHIEVE A DELAY IN HASSAN'S BEGINNING THE MARCH.
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